

wealthier than all three of those nations combined on a population-adjusted basis.

And, so, we have wealth in this Nation. What we have done, though, is make a conscious choice to make our government poor. We are going to spend about a million dollars a year more than we actually take in in revenue. And it's important to talk about why that is. First of all, the notion that discretionary spending is out of control, which is the popular belief, just isn't true. In fact, discretionary spending since 1980 has remained pretty static. If you don't believe that, then think about this statistic for a second. If you thought that government spending was running amok, you would expect that Federal employees were increasing, as well. Well, that's not true either. Since 1970, we actually have 16,000 less Federal workers than we did then.

Now, this doesn't mean that the government can't get leaner and that it can't get meaner. It just means that there's another culprit at work when we talk about why our government is so broke, even if our Nation is not, and that's revenue. Today, as a fraction of GDP, this country is collecting less taxes than it has in 60 years. In fact, today, we are collecting only about 15 percent of taxes as it relates to GDP. Now, we're spending more, but the bigger problem is that we're collecting less revenue.

So, if the problem is that the government is broke but that our Nation isn't, why does it feel like so many people are out there that are broke? Well, let's explore that with the last chart. Here is the essential problem. Over the last 30 years, the incomes of the bottom 90 percent of Americans have remained virtually flat while the incomes of the top 1 percent of Americans have grown by 300 percent.

□ 1140

This is a recipe for economic disaster because, if the bottom 90 percent of Americans don't have enough money to spend, then pretty soon they're not going to be able to buy what the top 1 percent are selling. Everybody fails if this economic equation continues.

And the economic history of the last 100 years tells us one thing—that government has a pretty important role to play in helping to create wealth among the bottom 90 percent. We create real, widespread wealth when we invest in education to move more kids more quickly through quality higher education. We create real, widespread wealth by investing in businesses that create technologies before they become commercially viable. And we create real, widespread wealth by investing in infrastructure so that once again people and goods in this country can move from economic center to economic center without delay.

Yes, these investments cost money, but this country isn't broke. Prosperity in this Nation has never ap-

peared out of thin air. It's never come from gutting consumer protection or environmental regulation, it's never come through slashing taxes for the wealthiest Americans, and it's never come from government just sitting by on the sidelines and letting other countries eat our technological lunch. It's come through an innovative partnership between public investment and private ingenuity.

Now, America can recommit ourselves to this partnership, but only if we wake up to the reality that we are not broke.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 41 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until noon.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Loving and Gracious God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

We ask today that You bless the Members of the People's House to be the best and most faithful servants of the people they serve. May they be filled with gratitude at the opportunity they have to serve in this place.

We thank You for the abilities they have been given to do their work, to contribute to the common good. May they use their talents as good stewards of Your many gifts and, thereby, be true servants of justice and partners in peace.

As this first session of the 112th Congress draws near its end and pressing legislative business once again weighs heavily on this Hill and throughout our land, withhold not Your Spirit of wisdom and truth from this Assembly. Give each Member clarity of thought and purity of motive so that they may render their service as their best selves.

May all that is done this day in the People's House be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. PALAZZO. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote

on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. PALAZZO. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. COURTNEY led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT PROTECTS THOSE WHO SERVE

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the House passed legislation that supports and provides for servicemembers and their military families who have chosen to dedicate their lives to service in our Armed Forces to protect American families.

After victoriously fighting the global war on terrorism for over a decade, our military families deserve recognition for their service. This bill gives to our military families a 1.6 percent increase in basic pay and protects against the rising cost of health care fees.

Additionally, the National Guard Chief, General Craig R. McKinley, will be provided a seat on the Joint Chiefs of Staff, giving the Guard a voice in military discussions. As a Guard veteran and proud dad of three Guard members under the command of Adjutant General Bob Livingston, I am grateful for the recognition of Guard capabilities.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

FACTS ARE STUBBORN THINGS

(Mr. COURTNEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, our third American President, John Adams, once said, "Facts are stubborn